

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 04224 281324Z

43

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 MC-02 EUR-25 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /171 W

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R 281215Z DEC 73

FM USINT CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4848

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 4224

BEIRUT POUCH BAGHDAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG IS UN

SUBJECT: INCREASE OF MILITARY THEMES IN EGYPTIAN PRESS

SUBJ: CAIRO 4212

1. IN THE PAST FEW DAYS THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE OF EGYPTIAN PRESS ARTICLES ON MILITARY SITUATION BETWEEN EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI FORCES. IN GENERAL, THESE HAVE TAKEN FORM OF GREATER EMPHASIS GIVEN TO UN SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENTS REGARDING CEASEFIRE INCIDENTS AND EXCHANGES OF FIRE BETWEEN OPPOSING SIDES, PARTICULARLY IN WEST BANK AREA OF CANAL. SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENTS ARE USUALLY DISTORTED TO REFLECT EXISTENCE OF GREATER DEGREE OF VIOLENCE THAN IS INDICATED IN HIS ANNOUNCEMENTS. WHEREVER POSSIBLE, PRESS REPORTS ADVANCES BY EGYPTIAN FORCES; SOMETIMES THIS IS TAKEN TO POINT OF ABSURDITY SUCH AS WHEN, TWO WEEKS AGO, AHRAM BANNER-HEADLINED EGYPTIAN FORWARD MOVEMENT OF 15 KILOMETERS IN ADABIYYA AREA. (THE FOLLOWING DAY AHRAM APOLOGIZED FOR
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THIS "TYPOGRAPHICAL" ERROR, STATING THAT ADVANCE HAD BEEN

ONLY ONE KILOMETER.)

2. DECEMBER 28 PRESS CARRIES THIS TREND TOWARD INCREASING VISIBILITY OF CEASEFIRE INCIDENTS ONE STEP FURTHER. UN SPOKESMAN'S DECEMBER 27 REPOT OF 44 INCIDENTS (REFTEL) IS FRAMED UNDER HEADLINE STATING THAT EGYPTIAN FORCES "DOMINATE NEW POSITIONS" IN WEST BANK AREA, AND AHARAM FEATURES YESTERDAY'S ISRAELI REPORTS OF USE OF ARTILLERY AND TANK CANNON FIRE IN DAILY CLASHES ALONG FRONT LINES. PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED IS YEDI'OT AHARANOT'S REPORT THAT ON DECEMBER 25 EGYPTIAN FORCES FIRED MORE THAN 1000 ARTILLERY ROUNDS AT IDF. DECEMBER 28 EGYPTIAN PAPERS ALSO FEATURE REPORTS OF ADDRESS BY WAR MINISTER ISMAIL TO NEW NAVAL GRADUATES, IN WHICH HE STATED THAT "WAR WILL CONTINUE UNTIL ISRAEL IS CONVINCED THAT ITS SECURITY LIES NOT IN OCCUPATION AND EXPANSION BUT IN RESPECT OF ARAB RIGHTS." PLACEMENT OF ARTICLE IN AHARAM'S AND GUMHURIYYA'S FIRST-PAGE CENTER POSITION IS AS IMPORTANT AS REPORTED SUBSTANCE OF ISMAIL'S REMARKS.

3. COMMENT: WE DO NOT READ THIS INCREASE OF MILITARY THEMES AS NECESSARILY MEANING AN INCREASE OF BELLIGERENCY. AT THE MOMENT, GOE APPEARS INTERESTED IN DEFLECTING CRITICISM OF ITS PARTICIPATION IN SETTLEMENT TALKS WITH ISRAELIS BY DISPLAYING STRONG MILITARY DETERMINATION AND INTENT TO TAKE TOLL OF ISRAELI FORCES WHILE TALKS IN GENEVA CONTINUE. TO THIS END, ISRAELI PRESS REPORTS OF CLASHES, MOVEMENT OF EGYPTIAN FORCES AND EVIDENT STRENGTH OF THIRD ARMY TO EAST OF CANAL NEATLY SERVE GOE'S PURPOSES.
SMITH

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